drugs and pharmaceuticals by Rs. 100 crores a year;

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal; and

(c) by when the Group is likely to be constituted ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government propose to constitute a group consisting of representatives of the industry and concerned Departments under the Government to explore the possibility of increasing export of drugs and pharmaceuticals. Orders regarding constitution of the group will be issued in due course.

**Amendments in the laws relating to beedi industry**

2800. SHRI RAFIQUE ALAM : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to amend the laws relating to beedi industry so as to prescribe stringent punishment for violation of these laws and to give wider legal protection to the workers engaged in this industry;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA :: (a) and (b) A Bill to amend the Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1976 in order to enable the Central Government to frame rules regarding penalties for employers who do not issue identity cards to Beedi workers is under the consideration of the Government.

(c) Does not arise.

**Government borrowings from International bodies**

2801. SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATIL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to scale down its borrowings from international bodies; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI) : (a) No, Sir. However, the Government have been following a cautious policy of external borrowings so as to ensure that its debt servicing liability is kept within prudent limits.

(b) Does not arise.

**News item captioned "Not juts honoured—they want an honourable life"**

2802. SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATIL : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item captioned "Not juts honours—they want an honourable life" which appeared in the Hindustan Times of the 18th October, 1986;

(b) whether Government propose to start a pension scheme or provide some financial assistance at nominal rate of interest to the craft persons who are recipients of 'National Awards'; if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) if no such proposal is under Government's consideration what other steps Government propose to take to provide relief to such persons ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government have a pension scheme for the mastercraftsmen. Under the scheme, craftsmen who are National or State Award winners and 60 years of age or above with income not exceeding Rs. 3500/- per annum are eligible to get pension at the rate of Rs. 300/- p.m. The recipients of National and State Awards are also assisted financially under the Apprenticeship Training Scheme where they impart training in crafts requiring specialised skill.

**Setting up of a Regional Institute of Meteorology in India**

2803. SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATIL : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :